

SOFTWARE HELP

Separating business from pleasure in Outlook

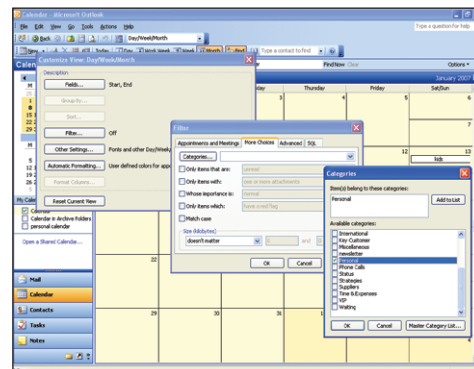
Q I'm using Outlook for my work appointments and would like to keep a separate calendar for my personal appointments. Can I do this and, if so, can I then show the appointments from both calendars together when I want to get an overall view of what I'm doing?

Ken Smith

A It's easy to create a new calendar for personal items; just choose File, New, Folder then select the option for it to contain calendar items. What's less easy is to combine the two into a single view. You can see the two side by side by going to the Calendar view, then putting a tick into your personal calendar as well as your work calendar in the panel labelled My Calendars.

We know of no way to show appointments from both calendars on the same monthly (or daily, or weekly) grid. If that's what you'd like to do, you'd probably be better sticking with one calendar and using the Label right-click option to choose the appropriate colour-coded appointment – Personal for personal appointments, for example, Business for work and so on. You should also use the Categories right-click option to label your personal appointments as personal, work appointments as Business and so on.

If you do this, you can show just your business appointments by setting a filter on the current view. From the View menu, choose Arrange by, Current View, Customize Current View. In the dialog box that appears, choose Filter, and from its dialog choose More Choices, then click the Categories button and select Business. To



▲ Define a new view to limit appointments shown to those in the Personal category

see only your personal appointments, follow the same steps and choose the Personal category.

You can make this process quicker by defining two separate views of your calendar. From the View menu, choose Arrange by, Current View, Define Views. Click the New button and give your new view a name, such as Personal. Set the Type of view to be Day/Week/Month, then work through the dialog boxes to set the filter to show just the Personal category.

Repeat the process, this time defining a view for the Business appointments. From now on, when you choose View, Arrange By, Current View, you'll have two new choices: Business and Personal. Picking one or the other shows only your calendar items for that category. Selecting Day/Week/Month from the options shows all appointments, whether business or personal. **KE**

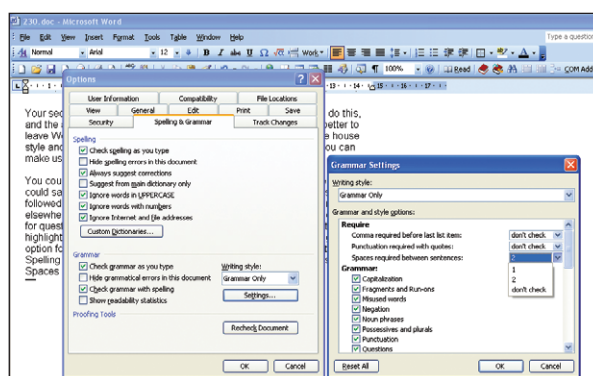
Tweaking Word's settings

Q I have two related questions about laying out a manuscript using Microsoft Word. First, I have a lot of equations in my text, such as $x = 5$. I want to avoid line breaks appearing in the middle of such equations, so you get $x =$ at the end of one line, followed by 5 at the start of the next line. Second, I've been told the house style is to follow a full stop by two spaces. How can I get Word to add a second space as the default formatting automatically, and to treat this as the default?

Jim Peacock

A Your first request is simple: just enter the spaces between the different parts of the equation as non-breaking spaces. To do this, hold down the Ctrl and Shift keys when you press the spacebar.

Your second request is trickier. There isn't an automatic way to do it. The accepted wisdom is that when using proportional fonts, it's better to leave Word to work out how much space to leave. However, if two spaces is the house style and you need to conform to that, there are some options you can use. You could add some entries to your AutoCorrect items using



▲ Set Word's Spelling & Grammar options to check the number of spaces between sentences

Tools, AutoCorrect Options. For example, you could specify that a full stop (.) should always be replaced by a full stop and two spaces (.). This would cause problems elsewhere, say with decimal numbers, but it would achieve what you want. You'd also need to add entries for question marks, exclamation marks and so on.

A better solution is to get Word to highlight any sentences where you've not followed this rule. From the Tools menu, choose Options, Spelling & Grammar, then press Settings. In the Require settings, set Spaces between sentences to 2. **KE**

YOUR EXPERTS

Contact Software Help for software advice and answers

Kay Ewbank

Database developer and productivity expert Kay Ewbank offers help with office applications.



Ben Pitt

Professional musician and keen photographer Ben Pitt gives advice on using creative software.



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Which format for digital audio?

Q I want to convert my records into a digital format but I'm not sure which format to go for. The ultimate destination would be an iPod, so MP3 may suffice. However, I am also a hi-fi enthusiast, so I would prefer to convert my originals to a non-compressed format for long-term storage on a dual-layer DVD, while perhaps storing compressed MP3s on the computer for general listening and transferring to the iPod. I'm also considering AAC format as this, I believe, is as good as commercial CDs and is also recognised by my iPod. I believe Wav files are the closest format to an original CD but that iPods don't recognise Wav files.

I also need advice on suitable software for converting records and cassettes. My record deck has a pre-amplified output and I can connect the line out of the hi-fi amplifier to

the computer's line in. The software must be suitable for a beginner, allow me to adjust and monitor the input, and not reduce the treble in an attempt to limit hiss, clicks or rumble.

P Nolan, philandhuyen_2@yahoo.com

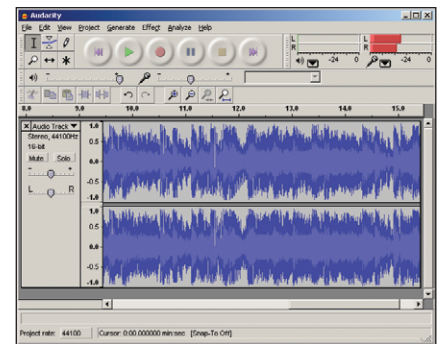
A Your understanding of the merits of the various audio formats is pretty accurate. Wav files don't use data compression, so a Wav file recorded at 44.1kHz, 16-bit is identical to the audio stored on a CD. Archiving your music collection to DVD in Wav format is an excellent idea, as this means you will always have high-quality files to refer back to if you decide to convert your collection into a different format. The downside is you can't add tags for the artist, album and track information, so you'll need to give the files descriptive names to help you remember what they are.

iPods can play Wav files, but they won't be able to hold much music in this format; a CD-quality Wav file is 10 times bigger than a 128Kbit/s MP3 or AAC file. AAC gives slightly better quality than MP3, but ties you into using iTunes and iPod players.

The MP3 format works with all hardware and software players and for most people 128Kbit/s MP3 files sound as good as the original CD. However, some people find they sound synthetic. If you're fussy about audio quality, go for AAC or try MP3 at a higher bit rate.



▲ iTunes can convert Wav files to MP3 or AAC format



▲ Audacity makes light work of recording from external audio sources

Various software packages are specifically designed to help you convert vinyl to CD and MP3. However, as you don't want any noise removal processing (which does tend to remove some of the original recording as it tackles noise and clicks), you should save your money and use the free Audacity editor, available from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>. You'll find a quick guide to using it in our DIY Podcasting feature in *Shopper* August 2006. Save your music as Wav files, which you can archive to DVD and import into iTunes to convert to MP3 or AAC format.

Run iTunes, click the Edit menu, Preferences, Advanced and Import, select a format and bit rate from the drop-down lists and click OK. Drag your Wav files into the main iTunes window, then right-click them and select Convert Selection to MP3 (or AAC, if this is what you chose). Finally, add track information. You can do this by clicking and typing in the main window. However, to add artist and album information to a group of tracks, select them all, right-click, select Get Info, and type the information into the relevant boxes. **BP**

Is Flash a good thing?

✉ In *Software Help*, *Shopper* February 2007, Ernest Redmond asked for help resizing the browsers of visitors to his website so his Flash content will look its best. I have the following recommendations.

First, never design a website using Flash. Lots of corporate websites use Flash to create snazzy introduction screens. I reckon about 95 per cent of users, including myself, immediately look for the Skip Intro button. If there isn't one, or it isn't obvious, we'll hit the Back button, and mentally log the website as a Flash-infested area that should be avoided at all costs. At the very least, upload your first draft, disconnect your broadband connection and view your luscious creation using a 56Kbit/s dial-up link. Then try it using a browser that doesn't have the Flash player installed; that should convince you.

The only legitimate uses of Flash are where a complex animation is needed to illustrate a point, or for radical artistic endeavours such as David Firth's <http://fat-pie.com>. In either case, there should be a 'Click to flash animation' button.

Second, don't try to control the user's browser. It's rude, and users will take offence. The whole point of the web is that pages should be designed to scale up or down to whatever hardware is in use. There are exceptions, of course, such as mobile phones. If you want to work to a fixed width, lock it using CSS, and either left-align it like the BBC website, or centre it and set a matching background colour. A width of 750 pixels is workable for most current browser resolutions. If you want greater accessibility and you have the development budget, detect the browser's resolution and alter the page to suit, not the other way round.

Paul Baker, paul@diabolus.org

A We would contend that some people enjoy an attractive, highly interactive website designed using Flash (and not just over-enthusiastic Flash programmers). According to Adobe, 96 per cent of PCs in 'mature markets' such as the US, Canada, UK, Germany, France and Japan have the Flash 6 or later plug-in installed, although the install base for the latest version 9 is just 36 per cent.

Your concern isn't so much with compatibility of Flash, but more with over-complex misuse, especially when fancy animations stand in the way of the information you're trying to track down. We would recommend that Flash is used only where it adds a significant benefit to the website user rather than the programmer. If you want to use Flash for page navigation, consider creating an alternative non-Flash version of the website for those who can't or don't want to use the Flash version.

We don't take deep offence at websites that lock the size of the browser, but we're sure you are not alone in holding this opinion. Again, it's something that tends to hold more benefit for the programmer than the user, in which case it's best avoided. However, locking the size of a window works effectively if you want to create a pop-up for a specific purpose, such as displaying an image or video. In these instances, there's no benefit to a webpage that's smaller or bigger than the media you want to display, and adjusting it to fit exactly keeps things neat and tidy. For an example, visit www.computershopper.co.uk and click on the images that accompany the reviews. **BP**

Exporting data from Microsoft AutoRoute

Q I am starting up a delivery service and need to keep track of mileage and destinations in a database. I would like to use my copy of Microsoft AutoRoute to get the start point, end point and distance, then export these details to a database so I can allocate a driver and work out his pay based on the mileage. I can then work out weekly pay and even give each driver a printed list of drop-offs for the day.

Is there any way of doing this with AutoRoute or a similar product? I need only the distance, start place and end place. I have started writing the database in Access and can use VBA, too.

David Williams

A To the best of our knowledge, AutoRoute doesn't provide a way to export data. Its routes are stored as 'waypoints' and worked out only when you ask to see the route. The data format is undocumented, so there isn't even a way to process the data files directly. Microsoft has another product called MapPoint that can be used to export data, but this costs a lot more.

A good way of getting text out of any program that can't export data is to use a printer driver. Before we show you how this is done, we must say that in this case, we think automation involves more work than it saves. However, if you're sure you won't transfer the details manually, here's what you do.

While AutoRoute provides no way to export its data, it will let you print your route. You can capture the printed data by installing a special type of printer driver on your PC. Choose Start, Printers and Faxes and Add a printer. Click through the wizard until you get to the stage where you select the printer type. Choose Generic under Manufacturer and Generic/Text Only. After installation, you'll be able to print your route to this printer and choose the

option to print to a file. This will give you a text file that can be imported into Excel. You can then run a macro to process the text file.

Your macro needs to find the first and last lines of real data. The easiest way to do this is to look for the words 'Arrive' and 'Depart'. The first line of real data has a format such as:

09:00 0.0 km 1Depart York Minster [Precentors Court, York, YO1 7...

You can split this at the word Depart to find the details of the start location that follow. You can find the last line of route data by looking for the word 'Arrive'. It has a format along the lines of:

10:15 122.9 km 2Arrive Durham Cathedral [Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3...

If you look for the first space in this line, the distance is given by the figure immediately after, which in this case is 122.9 km.

A working Excel macro looks like this:

```
Sub Macro1()  
Cells.Find(What:="Depart").Activate  
depstart = InStr(ActiveCell.Text,  
"Depart")  
depadd = Mid(ActiveCell.Text,  
depstart + 7, Len(ActiveCell.Text))  
MsgBox (depadd)  
Cells.Find(What:="Arrive").  
Activate  
arrend = InStr(13, ActiveCell.Text,  
" ")  
arrrtime = Mid(ActiveCell.Text, 12,  
arrend - 12)  
MsgBox (arrrtime)  
arrstart = InStr(ActiveCell.Text,  
"Arrive")  
arradd = Mid(ActiveCell.Text,  
arrstart + 7, Len(ActiveCell.  
Text))
```

```
MsgBox (arradd)  
End Sub
```

This version puts only the departure address, distance and arrival address into variables that are then shown in message boxes, but it could easily be expanded to export the data into Access; see 'Updating Access from Excel' (opposite) for advice. You could also avoid pulling in the address element of the destinations by chopping off the tail of each line, using InStr to search for the opening square bracket that identifies the start of the address.

In your situation, we would copy and paste to take the data across from AutoRoute to Access. It's not ideal, but by the time you've printed the route to a file, imported the file to Excel and run the macro, you could have copied and pasted the data for a number of deliveries. **KE**

▲ You can import the AutoRoute data into Excel for analysis

Custom page numbering in Word

Q I have a problem with Microsoft Word deciding it's clever than I am. I'm using Office 2003 on Windows XP Professional Edition. I have a document I want to print with slightly unusual page numbers. The document has two sections: the introduction (which shouldn't be numbered) is two pages long, and the main document starts on page three. I want the page numbering to start with page 1 being the first page of the second section. I'd like the page numbers to appear in the footer.

I'm tearing my hair out over this one. I either get page numbers running from page 1 in section 1 all the way through to page 23 at the end of section 2, or I get page numbers 1 and 2 in section 1, restarting with page 1 again in section 2. I'm tempted to create two separate documents, but that would be giving in to Word's unreasonable behaviour.

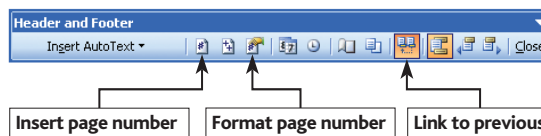
Rapidly Balding, London

A First, you need to ensure you actually have a section break between the two different sections. To insert a section break, you use Insert, Break, then choose one of the section break types. Your choices are Next page, Continuous, Even page or Odd page. These choices will affect the page after the section break; it continues on from the previous section without any apparent break, or becomes a new page, or always becomes an even- or an odd-numbered page. For this situation, your choice should be Next page.

Assuming that you've done this, you next place your cursor in the second section and choose View, Header and Footer. You'll see that your cursor is placed in the Header section of section 2. The icon in the Header and Footer toolbar that is automatically highlighted is called Link to Previous. This is used to link the header of the previous section.

By default, section headers and footers are linked. If you click on the icon, you'll break the link. The colour of the icon will change from the orange 'selected' colour to the background blue 'unselected' colour. Move to the footer and repeat the process to break the link there, too.

You will now be able to set up your separate headers and footers for the second section. The leftmost icon in the toolbar (Insert page number) inserts a page number, while the third icon (Format page number) allows you to specify that numbering starts from 1 for the second section. To remove page numbers from the first section, select any one of the unwanted placeholders and press Delete on your keyboard. **KE**



Updating Access from Excel

Q In *Software Help*, *Shopper* January 2007, you showed how to import Excel data into Access. I have a similar query. We manage our stock with an Access database, but process orders in Excel. In the Excel spreadsheet, we enter the part numbers and the number of parts used for a job. Then we go into the database and update the stock numbers for each part manually.

Can you help me write a macro that updates our stock database automatically based on the figures in the Excel spreadsheet?

Alan Derbyshire

A In general, it's a lot safer to put your whole system in Access. If details of parts used are stored outside the database, the stock levels shown inside the database will be wrong until you go in and update them. It would be neater to have a form within the database where you enter the parts and quantities you use. However, there may be good reasons why you don't want to go down this route. If you are determined to stick with Excel, you need to write a VBA routine in Excel to update Access.

First, you need to set up a reference to Access in Excel's VBA editor. Depending on the version of Excel you are using, you open the

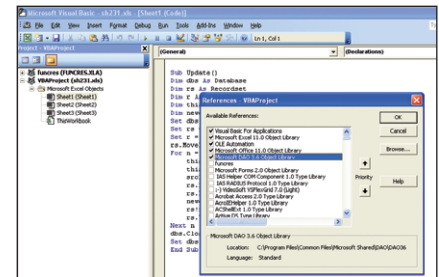
editor using Tools, Macro, Visual Basic Editor or similar. Go to Tools, References and check the Microsoft DAO library entry.

Your VBA code should look like that below. This routine assumes a database called *Shopper* and updates a table called *Stock*. The data in Excel is held in a named range called *proddets*. This has the product ID details in the first column and the quantities that have been used in the second column. The macro looks through each row in the range, and each time does a FindFirst to locate the appropriate record in the stock table in the database. The macro assumes the product ID will be found successfully.

Once found, the record is edited and the quantity field is amended to the current value minus the number used. In a finished system, you'd want to add extra code to handle the cases where you don't find a matching record, and where the quantity entered is greater than the stock level. **KE**

```
Sub Update()  
Dim dbs As Database  
Dim rs As Recordset  
Dim r As Range  
Dim thispres As String  
Dim newqty As Integer  
Set dbs = OpenDatabase("c:\data\  

```



▲ Don't forget to add a reference to the DAO library so you can use Access objects from Excel

```
shopper.mdb")  
Set rs = dbs.OpenRecordset("Stock",  
dbOpenDynaset)  
Set r = Worksheets("Sheet1").Range  
("proddets")  
rs.MoveLast  
For n = 1 To r.Rows.Count  
thisprodid = r.Cells(n, 1)  
thisqty = r.Cells(n, 2)  
srch = "ProductID = " & thisprodid  
rs.FindFirst srch  
rs.Edit  
newqty = rs!numinstock - thisqty  
rs!numinstock = newqty  
rs.Update  
Next n  
dbs.Close  
Set dbs = Nothing  
End Sub
```

Help me sort my Access combo box

Q My Microsoft Access database has a continuous form with a panel for each customer order in the Orders table. The form has a combo box with which users can select the product ordered. The underlying table draws this data from another table that contains two fields: a product ID and a product name. I show the product name on my form.

I want to sort the panels of the continuous form by product name. I've tried adding a command button that sets the record source for the form to a SQL Select statement:

```
strSQL = "SELECT ProdName, Quantity,  
Value, Details from Orders ORDER BY  
ProdName;"  
Me.RecordSource = strSQL
```

However, this sorts the panels by ProductID rather than by ProdName, even though the ProductID field is hidden in the combo box.

A Anderson

A If you examine the Orders table, you'll see that it has a ProductID column with a lookup value of:

```
SELECT DISTINCTROW Products.*  
FROM Products ORDER BY  
Products.ProdName;
```

This determines how it works with a combo box on a form. When this column is bound to a

combo box using the Access combo box wizard, the user will see the name of the products, but if you look at the actual data in the table, you'll discover that the ProductID value is stored. If you attempt to use an ORDER BY clause on the product column in the Orders table, it will be sorted by ProductID rather than the ProdName. This causes confusion, and there's a reasonably strong argument to avoid combo boxes created using the Access combo box wizard altogether.

Returning to the problem described, the simple answer is to use the Sort button on the toolbar rather than trying to add a command button. If you select the product name combo box and click the Sort button (the one labelled 'A-Z' with a down arrow beside it), you'll get the result you're after. If you want a button that replaces these two steps with a single click, change your form. Instead of basing it directly on the underlying Orders table, create a query that contains all the fields from Orders, and the ProdName field from the Products table (the one that contains the two fields, ProductID and ProdName). Call the query OrdersQry and use it as the data source for your form. You can then have your VBA code attached to the command button, and it should read:

```
strSQL = "SELECT ProdName, Quantity,  
Value, Details from OrderQry ORDER  
BY ProdName;"  
Me.RecordSource = strSQL
```

This will sort by ProdName, not ProductID. **KE**

Averages in Excel

Q I have a table of figures in Excel, where each row has a series of values. I need to find the row with the maximum average value. For example:

```
1 2 3  
3 4 2  
3 4 5
```

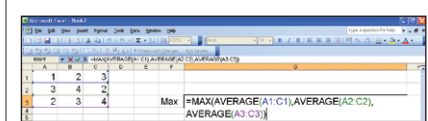
I want to average the rows, then find the maximum average – 4 for the third row, in this case.

Graham Perkins

A If your table is as small and as simple as the example shown, the easy solution is to use a formula such as:

```
=MAX(AVERAGE(A1:C1), AVERAGE(A2:C2),  
AVERAGE(A3:C3))
```

If you had a bigger grid of numbers, we'd calculate the averages in a separate column. At the bottom of this column, you can enter your Maximum calculation. Select the cell, hit the autosum button, then edit the formula replacing SUM with MAX. **KE**



▲ Find the maximum of the averages using Max and Average